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Committee on Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 27th, 2018

Senator Conway,

The American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET) welcomes the opportunity to comment on S.B. 675, the Humane Adoption of Companion Animals Used in Research Act of 2018. ASPET opposes the bill on the grounds that it is duplicative of existing adoption programs and the reporting requirement is burdensome to research institutions.

ASPET is a 5,000 member scientific society located in Bethesda, MD whose members conduct essential basic and clinical pharmacological research and work for academia, government, large pharmaceutical companies, small biotech companies, and non-profit organizations. ASPET members work in a variety of different fields and their efforts help to develop new medicines and therapeutic agents to fight existing and emerging diseases. Our members take seriously the responsibility of working with research animals and are committed to abiding by existing animal welfare regulations.

S.B. 675's requirement that research institutions adopt out dogs and cats is unnecessary because adoption of research animals is common practice in Maryland. Johns Hopkins already has in place a successful program to adopt out research animals (not just limited to dogs and cats). Many of the adoptions are by employees or their friends and family, and adoptive owners are screened to make sure they are capable of caring for the animal. The University of Maryland has a similar policy in place. A state-mandated adoption program is a solution to a problem that does not currently exist.

S.B. 675 also increases the regulatory burden on research institutions. Compliance with the reporting requirement will necessitate additional resources and divert these institutions from their primary aim of conducting research. Further, several categories of information subject to the requirement are already reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. That information is also publicly available. The additional information that would be collected from implementation of S.B. 675 is of questionable value to the state of Maryland and not worth the cost of compliance.

For these reasons, we recommend that S.B. 675 not be reported favorably.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Schuetz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Schuetz".

John D. Schuetz, PhD
President, ASPET